

# THE NATIONAL ERA.

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## THE NATIONAL ERA.

WASHINGTON, JULY 19, 1847.

THE BLACK MEN OF THE REVOLUTION AND WAR OF 1812.

The return of the Festival of our National Independence has called our attention to a matter which has been very carefully kept out of sight by orators and toast-drinkers. We allude to the participation of colored men in the great struggle for Freedom. It is not in accordance with our taste or our principles to eulogize the shadings of blood, even in a cause of acknowledged justice; but when we see a whole nation doing honor to the memories of one class of its defenders, to the total neglect of another class, who had the misfortune to be of darker complexion, we cannot forego the satisfaction of inviting notice to certain historical facts, which for the last half century have been quietly allowed aside, as no mere deserving of a place in patriotic recollection, than the descendants of the men to whom the facts in question relate have to a place in a Fourth of July procession.

Of the services and sufferings of the colored soldiers of the Revolution, no attempt has, to our knowledge, been made to preserve a record. They have had no historian. With here and there an exception, they have all passed away, and only some faint tradition of their campaign under Washington, and Greene, and Lafayette, and of their cruelties under Decatur and Barry, lingers among their descendants. Yet enough is known to show that the free colored men of the United States bore their full proportion of the services and trials of the Revolutionary war.

The late Governor Eustis of Massachusetts, the pride and boast of the Democracy of the East, an active participant in the war, and therefore most competent witness—Governor Merrill, of New Hampshire, Judge Humprey of Pennsylvania, and other members of Congress, in the debate on the question of admitting Missouri as a slave State into the Union, bore emphatic testimony to the efficiency and heroism of the black troops. Hon. Calvin Goddard, of Connecticut, states that, in the little circle of his residence, he was instrumental in securing, under the act of 1813, the pensions of nineteen colored soldiers. "I cannot," he says, "refrain from mentioning one aged black man, Primus Babcock, who proudly presented to me an honorable discharge from service during the war, dated at the close of it, wholly in the handwriting of George Washington. Nor can I forget the expression of his feelings, when informed, after his discharge had been sent to the War Department, that it could not be returned. At his request it was written for, as he seemed inclined to spurn the pension and reclaim the discharge." There is a touching anecdote related of Baron Steuben, on the occasion of the disbandment of the American army. A black soldier, with his wounds unhealed, utterly destitute, stood on the wharf just as a vessel bound for his distant home was getting under weigh. The poor fellow gazed at the vessel with tears in his eyes, and gave himself up to despair. The warm-hearted foreigner witnessed his emotion, and, inquiring into the cause of it, took his last dollar from his purse, and gave it to him, with tears of sympathy trickling down his cheeks. Overwhelmed with gratitude, the poor wounded soldier hailed the sloop, and was received on board. As it moved out from the wharf, he cried over his noble friend on shore, "God Almighty bless you, master Baron!"

In Rhode Island, says Governor Eustis, in his able speech against slavery in Missouri, 12th of 12th month, 1830, "the blacks formed an entire regiment, and they discharged their duty with zeal and fidelity. The gallant defence of Red Bank, in which the black regiments bore a part, is among the proofs of their valor." In this contest, it will be recollect that four hundred men met and repulsed, after a terrible and sanguinary struggle, fifteen hundred Hessian troops, headed by Count Donop. The glory of the defence of Red Bank, which has been pronounced one of the most heroic actions of the war, belongs in reality to black men; yet who now hears them spoken of in connection with it? Among the traits which distinguished the black regiment, was devotion to their officers. In the attack made upon the American lines near Croton river, on the 13th of 6th month, 1781, Colonel Greene, the commander of the regiment, was cut down and mortally wounded; but the sabres of the enemy only reached him through the bodies of his faithful guard of blacks, who hovered over him to protect him, every one of whom was killed. The late Rev. Dr. Harris, of Dunbaron, New Hampshire, a Revolutionary veteran, stated, in a speech at Princeton, New Hampshire, some years ago, that on one occasion the regiment to which he was attached was commanded to defend an important position, which the enemy thrice assailed, and from which they were as often repulsed. "There was," said the venerable speaker, "a regiment of blacks in the same situation as a regiment of negroes fighting for our liberty and independence, not a white man among them but the officers—in the same dangerous and responsible position. Had they been unfaithful, or given way before the enemy, all would have been lost. Three times in succession were they attacked with most desperate fury by well-disciplined and veteran troops, and three times did they successfully repel the assault, and thus preserve an army. They fought thus through the war. They were brave and hardy troops."

In the debate in the New York Convention of 1821, for amending the Constitution of the State, on the question of extending the right of suffrage to the blacks, Dr. Clarke, the delegate from Delaware county, and other members, made honorable mention of the services of the colored troops in the Revolutionary army. The late James Forten, of Philadelphia, well known as a colored man of wealth, intelligence, and philanthropy, enlisted in the American navy under Captain Decatur, of the Royal Louis, was taken prisoner during his second cruise, and with nineteen other colored men, confined on board the horrible Jersey prison ship. All the vessels in the American service at that period were partly manned by blacks. The old citizens of Philadelphia to this day remember the fact, that when the troops of the North marched through the city, one or more colored companies were attached to nearly all the regiments.

Governor Eustis, in the speech before quoted, states that the free colored soldiers entered the ranks with the whites. The time of those who were slaves was purchased of their masters, and they were induced to enter the service in consequence of a law of Congress by which, on their service in the ranks during the war, they were made freemen. This hope of liberty inspired them with courage to oppose their masters to the dread arbitrament of battle. Their bones whiten every striken field of the Revolution; their feet tracked with blood the snows of Jersey; their toil built up

well known. When his master told him that they were on the point of starting for the army, to fight for liberty, he shrewdly suggested that he was indeed going to fight for his liberty. Struck with the reasonableness and justice of this suggestion, General S. at once gave him his freedom.

The Hon. Tristan Burges, of Rhode Island, in a speech in Congress, 1st month, 1828, said: "At the commencement of the Revolutionary war, Rhode Island had a number of slaves. A regiment of them were enlisted into the Continental service, and no fewer men met the enemy in battle, but one of them was permitted to be a soldier until he had first been made a Freeman."

The celebrated Charles Pinckney of South Carolina, in his speech on the Missouri question, and in defense of the slave representation of the South, made the following admissions:

"Upon the colored people) were in numerous instances the pioneers, and in all, the laborers of our armies. To their hands were owing the greatest part of the fortifications raised for the protection of the country. Fort Moultrie gave, at an early period of the inexperienced and untried valor of our citizens, immortality to the American Revolution. The colored men of the South, bodies of them were enrolled, and fought side by side with the whites at the battles of the Revolution."

Let us now look forward thirty or forty years, to the last war with Great Britain, and see whether the whites enjoyed a monopoly of patriotism.

Said Martindale, of New York, in Congress, 22d of 1st month, 1828: "Slaves, or negroes who had been slaves, were enlisted as soldiers in the war of the Revolution; and I myself saw a battalion of them, a fine martial looking men, when we saw, at last, the Northern army in the last war, on its march from Plattsburg to Sackett's Harbor."

Honor Minister, of Pennsylvania, in Congress, 23d month 7th, 1828, said: "The Africans made excellent soldiers. Large numbers of them were with Perry, and helped to gain the brilliant victory of Lake Erie. A whole battalion of them were distinguished for their orderly appearance."

Dr. Clarke, in the Convention which revised the Constitution of New York, in 1821, speaking of the colored inhabitants of the State, said:

"In 1776, in the course of the war, we largely took some of your most splendid victories. On Lake Erie and Champlain, where your fleets triumphed over a foe superior in numbers and numbers of death, from the enemy he laid it aside; and in these times, these people were found as ready and as willing to volunteer in our service as any other. They were not compelled to give up their freedom. Not a single soul placed them beyond your community power. But there was no necessity for its exercise; they were volunteers; yes, sir, volunteers to defend that very country from the invasions and ravages of a ruthless and vindictive foe, which had treated them with insult, degradation, and Oppression."

On the capture of Washington by the British forces, it was judged expedient to fortify, without delay, the principal towns and cities exposed to similar attacks. The Vigilance Committee of Philadelphia waited upon three of the principal colored citizens, viz: James Forten, Bishop Allen, and Abolition Jones, soliciting the aid of the people to garrison the fortifications. They were not compelled to give up their freedom. Not a single soul placed them beyond your community power. But there was no necessity for its exercise; they were volunteers; yes, sir, volunteers to defend that very country from the invasions and ravages of a ruthless and vindictive foe, which had treated them with insult, degradation, and Oppression."

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“I will be with you before I sleep.”

“What’s the matter with Henry?” said Mrs. Carter, as she entered the room. “Has he drawn another prize?”

“I guess not, mother,” said Mary, “only dreaming again, perhaps.”

At last, when Henry arrived from Plymouth with an accepted draft for ten thousand dollars, in favor of Mr. Holmes and a bank book in which he had credit for an equal sum. And the brig Mary made some of the most profitable voyages that were ever made in Boston.

“I think that, twenty-five at least, as I was riding into Plymouth, with Bradford and his grand-daughter, I referred to the anecdote, and the conclusion that ‘luck was everything.’”

“There is something in that which I hold the ticket, with the belief that I had the prize, the resolutions which I formed while sitting and gazing at the lofty spars of my brig, and the conning virtue, the full piet, and the perfect love of Mary, dreamt for me that she should have been with the brig. So you see, it was her contemplation, woman’s piet, and woman’s love, that made me what I am. And let me add, friend C., that I owe more to woman than the world credits to her. Let us, at least, do her justice.”

## THE NATIONAL ERA.

WASHINGTON, JULY 22, 1847.

“Copies of the National Era may be purchased, at six and a quarter cents each, on Friday morning of every week, at the Anti-Slavery Rooms, New York. A supply of most of the back numbers may also be obtained of William Harnet, Agent, 22 Spruce street.

“Copies of the National Era may be purchased, at six and a quarter cents each, at the Depository for the Sale of Cheap Publications, No. 10 Baltimore street, Baltimore.

“The communication of E., of Philadelphia, and other communications, will appear in our next.

## GENERAL NOMINATING CONVENTION OF THE LIBERTY PARTY.

In the exercise of a freedom which no “committee” or “patrons” have ever interfered with, we took occasion, some weeks ago, in respectful, but explicit terms, and without impeachment of motive, to censure the summary mode in which the chairman *pro tem.* of the Central Liberty Committee announced the settlement of the question of a Convention. We did what we believed to be our duty, and precisely what we should do again, under similar circumstances.

Having, however, recognised the right of a majority of the Committee to fix the time for a Convention, and declared that we would “throw no obstacle in its way,” we now do what we intended, when that declaration was made, to do—publish on its first appearance the official call for a Convention, and earnestly urge upon our friends everywhere the duty of responding to it, and sustaining the action of the Committee, no matter how much some of them may have differed from the majority of its members on the question of time.

Hereafter, when a few gentlemen, who have seen proper to read us out of the Liberty ranks, shall have learned that the system of threats and coercion is not to be put in force by brother against brother, we may offer some explanation of certain remarks we made respecting our future course. Till then, we shall say no more, than that those gentlemen have grossly misconstrued us.

We are inclined to think that the great prominence given to the discussion of the time of holding the Convention, and the excitement which it has created in the minds of many, will tend to make the meeting unusually large and interesting.

## LIBERTY NATIONAL CONVENTION.

To the Members of the Liberty Party of the United States.

The Presidential election of 1848 is hastening on. It is time that the faithful friends of Liberty should meet to nominate true and tried men for their candidates for the offices of President and Vice-President of the United States.

The National Corresponding Committee has taken the best means in their power to judge, both of the sentiments of the people and the signs of the times, as to what course the true interests of the party and the permanent good of the cause require. They have set apart the 20th of October, the National Nominating Convention to meet at the city of Buffalo, in the State of New York, on Wednesday, the 20th of October, at 10 o’clock A. M. It is thought that the Convention should be organized, so as to be ready, to welcome all members of the Liberty party, and fully invited to participate in its deliberations and conclusions. In voting on the nominations, however, each State will be entitled to the same number of votes that it has in the electoral college, that is, the number of its Senators and Representatives in Congress. It is believed that the following method will serve as exact justice as is attainable in the details:

1. Any delegate may represent a district, if he is chosen by a District Convention, properly called.

2. If a State has chosen its quota of delegates, at a regular State Convention, these delegates, or a majority of them, if present, shall cast the vote of the State, either individually or collectively, as they may agree.

3. If a State Convention has made any other provision for throwing its vote, such provision shall stand.

4. In the failure of all these, the members of the party present from any State, may hold a meeting of public delegates and decide how the vote of their State shall be cast.

5. If they do not decide, then all the members present shall vote on the nomination, and their vote shall stand as the vote of the State.

George W. Johnson, Esq., of Connecticut, is requested to speak in the name of the Committee, for obtaining a suitable place for the meeting.

Editors of Liberty papers are requested to circulate this notice, and urge a general attendance at the convention.

The members of this Committee—the State Central Committees—in their respective States, are requested to do all they can, by personal correspondence and otherwise, to secure a full representation, both for the main meeting and for the division.

It is probable the Convention will continue two days.

By the National Committee of the Liberty party.

Alfred Stewart, of New York, Chairman.

Joseph Lovett, of Massachusetts.

Schuyler Hovey, of New Jersey.

Titus Hutchinson, of Vermont.

Samuel Fessenden, of Maine.

F. Julius Lemoyne, of Pennsylvania.

Frank Gannett, of Connecticut.

The following members of the Committee have expressed their opinion in favor of postponing the Convention until next year.

S. P. Chase, of Ohio.

Daniel Hilt, of New Hampshire.

Boston, July, 1847.

## COLLECTION.

The Anti-Slavery Standard corrects its statement concerning the preface remarks to the letter of a Presbyter of South Carolina, and that reminds us that we did it injustice in saying that it never credited the *Era* with Judge Woolbury’s charge. We stand corrected.

And now, we submit to our contemporary of the Standard, whether this professed passage at arms between us does not strikingly show the folly of being captious, and in haste to condemn.

## DEATH OF AN AUTHOR.

The papers announce the death of Joseph C. Neal, the author of the *Charcoal Sketches*. He died in Philadelphia, on the 18th instant, after a few hours illness.

## CHICAGO CONVENTION.

The full report of proceedings of this great River and Harbor Convention may be found on the outside of the *Era*. A valued friend has laid us under great obligations, by furnishing us with many particulars not found in the report selected from the Chicago paper. Since the publication of these proceedings, we have seen in some of the papers the letter from Mr. Webster to the Convention. It is brief, explicit, and expresses entire

sympathy with the objects of the meeting. Of course, the principle laid down as a basis for internal improvements is repugnant to the doctrine of strict construction.

## BENJAMIN LUNDY.

THE LIFE, TRAVELS, AND OPINIONS OF BENJAMIN LUNDY, including his journeys to Texas and Mexico, with a Sketch of Controversy Events, and a Notice of the Revolution in Hayti, compiled under the direction and on behalf of his Children. Philadelphia: Published by W. D. PARISH, No. 4 North Fifth street.

There is, perhaps, no individual connected with the Anti-Slavery enterprise whose life embodies so many interesting events as the subject of this memoir. The first movement against slavery on this continent commenced in 1729, and closed by the passage of the ordinance of 1787—ranging through a period of fifty-eight years, and enlisting in its support the brightest talent and the purest philanthropy of which the country could boast.

The fruits of the movement were, the abolition of slavery in the Northern and Middle States; the enactment of laws favoring voluntary emancipation in several Southern States, and a pledge of the North American Congress of 1774 not to engage in the slave trade themselves, or lease their ships to others engaged in the traffic. Then followed the glorious ordinance of 1787, securing to the slave territory northwest of the Ohio river the blessings of freedom.

In the years 1830 and 1831, he travelled much, taking with him a part of his type, and printing the paper at various places, while the nominal place of publication was still Washington. During this period he visited Canada and Texas, the former for the purpose of ascertaining for himself the condition of the colored people, and the latter to establish a settlement for that class of persons, for the cultivation of sugar, cotton, and rice, by free labor. Failing to accomplish his object in his first expedition to Texas, he set out again for Texas and Mexico in May, 1833. The cholera raged at that time throughout the South, and he was constantly exposed, but escaped with only a slight attack. “This cholera,” he says, “is a most extraordinary disorder. It attacks with the ferocity of a tiger, and keeps its hold a bulldog, and as soon as it is conquered returns to the charge again.” He thought the disease was produced by poisonous animals floating in the atmosphere, and taken into the system with the breath.

His adventures in Texas and Mexico are highly interesting. At one time, all his money being exhausted, he supported himself by making suspenders and shot bags. After encountering many difficulties, and failing to accomplish his great object, owing to legal difficulties, he entered into an agreement with one Blackaller to obtain the grants for him, and returned homewards as far as Nashville, Tennessee. Here he obtained the means necessary to prosecute his enterprise, and in May, 1834, set out on his return to Texas and Mexico. He now had a second attack of cholera, which was followed by a fever, with occasional returns of cholera symptoms for ten days. On his arrival at Monrovia, he learned, to his extreme mortification, that Blackaller had failed in his efforts to obtain the land. Just as he was about to secure the grant, “advice” was received from the Legislature, that they were about to enact a law prohibiting the further grant of lands in any part of the State, and requiring him to desist from any further effort.” “This,” he says, “after all my perils and hardships, I am completely baffled in my attempts to establish colonies in Texas.”

After suffering many hardships, and travelling on a little Cherokee pony through a great extent of country, he at length arrived at New Orleans. On his way home, he was detained by sickness at Nashville, and while there learned that a friend in New York had left him a legacy of fifteen hundred dollars. Soon after his return, he resumed the publication of the Genius of Universal Emancipation, but on the issue of one number it was suspended for nine months.

Meantime, he commenced a new weekly paper at Philadelphia, entitled the *National Enquirer*; and the same month he resumed the publication of the “Genius.” In August, 1837, he announced the publication of the second edition of a pamphlet entitled the “War in Texas,” in which he vigorously opposed annexation. His writings about this time attracted the attention of John Quincy Adams, and led to an acquaintance, and some correspondence between him and Lundy.

In March, 1838, he retired from the office of a slave he had never trod, was the first voice heard pleading for the forgotten bondman. Benjamin Lundy was the pioneer in the modern Anti-Slavery movement. Born in New Jersey, of humble Quaker parents, he emigrated early in life to Ohio, where, like so many others of her hardy and noble sons, penniless and uneducated, by his own strong arm and the blessing of God, he achieved his own fortune. At the age of twenty-six, he was first awakened to the evils of slavery by a short residence in Wheeling, Virginia, then the thoroughfare of slave traders to the South. He soon afterwards formed a society, and issued an address or circular. Other societies were formed, and a paper established at Mount Pleasant, Ohio, called the Philanthropist, of which he soon became co-editor. This was in 1815. In the fall of 1819 we find him in St. Louis, Missouri, whether he had gone on business, actively engaged in the discussion of the famous “Missouri question?” “My feelings,” he remarks in his journal, “prompted me to engage in the controversy,” and “I devoted myself sedulously to an exposition in the newspaper.” Missouri and Illinois, he was fully invited to participate in its deliberations and conclusions. In voting on the nominations, however, each State will be entitled to the same number of votes that it has in the electoral college, that is, the number of its Senators and Representatives in Congress. It is believed that the following method will serve as exact justice as is attainable in the details:

1. Any delegate may represent a district, if he is chosen by a District Convention, properly called.

2. If a State has chosen its quota of delegates, at a regular State Convention, these delegates, or a majority of them, if present, shall cast the vote of the State, either individually or collectively, as they may agree.

3. If a State Convention has made any other provision for throwing its vote, such provision shall stand.

4. In the failure of all these, the members of the party present from any State, may hold a meeting of public delegates and decide how the vote of their State shall be cast.

5. If they do not decide, then all the members present shall vote on the nomination, and their vote shall stand as the vote of the State.

The National Corresponding Committee has taken the best means in their power to judge, both of the sentiments of the people and the signs of the times, as to what course the true interests of the party and the permanent good of the cause require. They have set apart the 20th of October, the National Nominating Convention to meet at the city of Buffalo, in the State of New York, on Wednesday, the 20th of October, at 10 o’clock A. M. It is thought that the Convention should be organized, so as to be ready, to welcome all members of the Liberty party, and fully invited to participate in its deliberations and conclusions. In voting on the nominations, however, each State will be entitled to the same number of votes that it has in the electoral college, that is, the number of its Senators and Representatives in Congress. It is believed that the following method will serve as exact justice as is attainable in the details:

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